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1945

SWAMI
ABHEDANANDA

IDEAL OF EDUCATION

IDEAL OF EDUCATION

by

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

AKSHARA GRANTHALAYA
ACC.NO. S032288

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PREFACE

Education is the background of all nations. Proper education alone can build the character of a nation, and awaken the consciousness of nationality and freedom. Nation's ideal, nation's morality and sense of duty and everything dpend upon her education. It is education that enables a man to be a 'real and perfect man'.

But education must be practical. It must reform not only the stereotyped system of education, but also its academic procedure, and impart real knowledge and means that will enable men to stand on their own feet, and make them understand the value of the ideal and principles of education in their everyday life. And such is the earnest appeal of the patriotic author of this book to every one.

This book contains four lectures delivered by the Swami at different places in different times. The first lecture was delivered under the auspicies of the *Bihar Youngmen's Institute* at Patna in 1925, under the presidency of the then Minister of Education. It was so much appreciated that the President, out of his own accord, defrayed all the expenses for its publication. The second lecture was delivered in 1906 at Kualalumpur on the Swami's first return from the West. The third lecture was delivered in Madras in 1906 and has already been published in the book *Lectures in India*. The last lecture was given by the Swami at the *Educational Conference* in America as an amendment for the proposal of Dr. William H. Jackson, the noted professor of the Columbia University.

The readers will find in these lectures the broad vision and views of the Swami. Education should not be based alone upon the principle of economic betterment and industrial growth, but also on the moral elevation and spiritual ground so that it will make the nation every way progressive and practical. The practical training in all branches of science, art, and industry, along with the

philosophical, moral and spiritual development should be the aim of education. This principle should be worked out by us for the well-being of the nation. The Swami realized this truth as a result of his experiences of many years' stay in America and many other countries of the world. His frequent visits to various institutions of education and close contact with the leading educationists in America led him to believe that the progress of a nation entirely depended upon the practical education in all branches of knowledge. And this practical education is to be imparted not only to the boys, but also to the girls as well, regardless of class and community. Without the practical application of this principle, our national progress is impossible. That is why in these lectures the Swami has again and again appealed to India's men of light and leading, to improve the present system of education which is surely a hindrance to our economic, cultural, moral and spiritual advancement. Let our leaders in special and people in general go through these lectures, and be acquainted with the Swami's wise views on education.

A detailed content and an index have been added for the convenience of the readers. We hope that this volume will serve the purpose of the need of the present times, and will show the way to those who are really eager to know the ideal of education.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

CHAPTER I

Ideal of Education

(Delivered at the
Bihar Young Men's Institute, Patna,
on January 27, 1925)

Mr. Chairman and Brethren,

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you this evening to speak on the *Ideal of Education,* as announced by our Chairman. Before going into the subject of this evening, allow me to make a few introductory remarks about my activities in Europe and America. For the last twenty-five years I was preaching India before the American public, as also in England and other parts of Europe. My object was to defend India and her culture against the unjust criticisms of the Christian missionaries and other sectarians, who wanted to convert the Indians into Christianity and to raise funds for that purpose. I had the honour and privilege of representing India or rather the Indian culture in various universities of the United States and Canada, where I met some of the greatest professors and educators of the West. I also had the privilege of talking with Professor Max Mueller in Sanskrit and of meeting Professor Paul Deussen, who translated sixty of our *Upanishads* into German and who was the author of *System des Vedanta* and the *Philosophy of the Upanishads.* Professor

Deussen once came to India, and delivered a lecture in Sanskrit in Bombay. He spoke in Sanskrit to the ekka-drivers who could not understand him. The same venerable Professor Paul Deussen of Kiel University was in London, when I was there, and to him I was introduced by my illustrious predecessor the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda called me over to London in 1896, and after giving me the charge of his work in London, he returned to India, his motherland. I stayed on, and carried on the work which he had entrusted to me. Then I was asked to go over to America, and make my headquarters in New York. Our Chairman has already said that the Vedanta Society of New York was started by Swami Vivekananda in 1894. This Society was in its infancy, when I arrived at New York in 1897. It had only a handful of members at first, but after a hard struggle I succeeded in making it a well-established society. When I landed at New York, I was penniless, and during my twenty-five years stay in the United States, I never drew a pice from India. I was entertained by the American people, who gave me food, clothes, and a house, and took care of me. They also gave me an Ashram, measuring about 320 acres of land in a farm and a home in the city of New York worth nearly two lakhs of rupees. Now there are four Swamis of our Mission who are working in different centres in the United States of America.

The subject of this evening makes me think of the past glory of India, our holy motherland. The civilization and culture of ancient India were grand and glorious. India has contributed her culture to the Western nations in various branches of knowledge. The world owes its first lessons in Geometry and

Algebra *(Vijaganita)* to India. The 47th proposition of Euclid : A square on the hypotenuse of a rectangular traingle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides—was ascribed to Pythagoras, but it was known in India centuries before Pythagoras was born. It is mentioned in the *Sulvasutras* of the Vedic age. Algebra was introduced into Europe from India. From researches we have gathered that Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine of Europe, who lived about 400 B.C., borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. In Chemistry, as also in Surgery, we know from the study of the *Sushruta,* the Hindus excelled other nations. We know from the accounts that have been left to us by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador, who lived in the court of Chandragupta in the fourth century before Christ, that Alexander the Great used to keep Hindu physicians in his camp because he preferred them to Greek physicians. Nearchus and Arrian spoke highly of the wonderful healing powers of the Arabs, who learnt it in India, and Leonardo da Pisa introduced it into Italy and several countries of Europe in the thirteenth century. In fact, Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, all these were first taught in India. The Arabs learnt these from India and carried them into the West. The world owes decimal notation to India. It was unknown to the Greeks and Romans; and Arithmatic as a practical science would have been impossible without decimal notation. The world owes its first lessons in Medicine to India. Although there is a general belief that Europe derived her knowledge of medicine from Greece, still it is not correct.

In various branches of science, philosophy, art, and music,the Hindus were the first teachers. For instance, the Greeks had five

notes of music at first, but the Hindus developed seven notes of Music and had three octaves long before the Greeks had them. During the Vedic period, *Sama Veda* used to be sung and chanted with those notes. Wagner's music with its special *motifs* was indebted to Indian music. Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, had a conversation with Wagner on this subject, from which we learn that the great German musician Wagner studied the Latin-translation of the Sanskrit science of music, and that he learnt from the Sanskrit science of music those principal *motifs*, which have made his music so original and so wonderful. In other branches of knowledge also India developed her culture to a great extent, for instance, in Astronomy, and in developing the theory of evolution of the world out of *Prakriti*, the eternal cosmic Energy as described in the *Sankhya* system of philosophy. All these different branches of study were highly developed in India centuries before Christ, and even today the European scholars admit this fact. I can quote from Sir Monier Williams, who in his book entitled *Brahminism and Hinduism*, says that "the Hindus were Spinozaites more than 2,000 years before the existence of Spinoza; and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like evolution existed in any language of the world."[1] His remarks were correct, because we learn from the philosophy of *Sankhya* that the whole world was not created by an extra-cosmic personal God, who is sitting on his throne above the clouds, but that there was one eternal cosmic Energy which was called by the name of *Prakriti* (the same as Latin

1 Sir Monier Monier Williams ! *Hinduism and Brahminism, p. 12*

Procreatrix), the creative Energy of the universe. This energy is indestructible and uncreatable, yet changeable. It is one and enternal. Today Western science admits that there is only one eternal cosmic energy, the sum total of which neither increases nor decreases. This fact was established by Kapila, the founder of the *Sankhya* system of philosophy in the seventh century before Christ. We had our Newton in Aryabhatta who lived about 476 A.D., and who declared that the earth was moving upon its own axis round the sun. Long before the Copernican system of Astronomy was known to the Europeans, this aryabhatta's system was taught in India, and it was Aryabhatta who first declared that the law of gravitation existed; he called it *Madhyakarshana,* i.e., attraction towards the centre. We had our Shakespeare in Kalidas; we had our philosopher greater than Kant and Hegel in Sankaracharya, greater than Hume and Berkeley in Vashistha; and we had materialistic philosophy in the system of Kanada. The atomic theory of Kanada is a wonder to the Western minds, because in such an early age, i.e. in the pre-Buddhistic period, Kanada proved to the world that this external universe was made up of minute particles of matter—*anu* (atoms), which were indestructible. Again, we find that these atoms of Kanada were not the final particles of the material world, but particles finer than atoms were discovered by Kapila, and he called them *Tanmatras* which would be similar to the electrons and protons of modern science. The electrons are the force centres of negative electricity and the protons are of positive electricity. Such great advancement was made in different branches of knowledge and science in the pre-Buddhistic age which lasted between 1500 B.C. and 600 B.C.[1]

1. *Vide* Swami Abhedananda : *India and Her People*, pp. 18-20.

Then in moral and spiritual lines, the Hindus were the first teachers in the world. Centuries before the Christian era, nay, long before Moses gave the Ten Commandments to the nomadic tribes of Israel in that remote antiquity, when the European nations were eating raw animal flesh, living in caves and forests, tattooing their bodies, wearing animal skins, the civilization of India was in its high glory. The dawn of civilization first broke not upon the horizon of Greece, Europe, or Arabia, but upon the horizon of India. India is not a country of today, but she had the sublime teachings of Vedanta long before the time of Moses, when Krishna sang the *Bhagavat Gita* in the battle-field of Kurukshetra. All those who came in touch with India were benefited. During the Buddhistic period, as we know from the edicts of Asoka, Buddhist preachers were sent out to different parts of the then civilized world, from Siberia to Ceylon, and from China to Egypt. Buddhist monks travelled and preached the gospel of love for all, and the highest ethics of humanitarianism in foreign countries. Those teachings of Buddha were afterwards emphasized in the teachings of Jesus the Christ. Christianity can be traced back to the Hindu ideals in many of its doctrines and dogmas. The principal part of Christianity i.e., Baptism was not known among the Jews of that time, but it came from the Ganges as Ernest Renan has said in his *Life of Jesus.*

The education of a nation depends upon its ideal of civilization. The Hindu ideal of civilization from prehistoric times was purely moral and spiritual. Consequently, the civilization of ancient India was based, not upon commercial principles of modern times and not upon the selfish ideal of political gain and power over other nations, but upon the eternal spiritual laws

which govern our soul. Intellectual culture was not regarded as the highest ideal, but spiritual realization of the relation that exists between the individual soul and the universal spirit was the principal aim of education. 'Education', as Herbert Spencer has said, "is the training for completeness of life" Education will bring out the perfection of the man, which is already latent in his soul. Education does not mean that a lot of ideas or informations will be poured into the brain of the individual, and they will run riot. But it means the gradual growth and development of the soul from its infancy to maturity. Education should be based upon the spiritual ideal that each individual soul is potentially divine, that it possesses infinite potentiality and infinite possibility, and that knowledge cannot come from outside into inside, but that all knowledge evolves from inside. No one can teach you, but you teach yourself and the teachers only give suggestions. This should be the principle of education. Today, in our universities, we find just the opposite principle. A student is allowed to study and memorize the notes of his professors and pass the examinations; and then he comes out as a *'pashakara murkha'*—a learned fool. He gets a diploma for his ignorance. That is not the ideal of education. Education does not mean intellectual culture, but it means the development and spiritual unfoldment of the soul in all the various branches of learning.

The ideal of education, in America, is revolutionizing the ideals of the past ages. Today an infant boy or girl of four or five years of age, in America, is allowed to go into the kindergarten school-room, where all kinds of toys, music-boxes, pictures for painting and drawing are kept. The children are allowed to go inside the room, and are asked to choose what they would like, in

order to know their natural inclinations. If any one is attracted to the music-box, he would excel in music, and, therefore, such training should be given to him as would make him the best musician of the world. He should, therefore, not be allowed to go into a college and become a graduate in the literary line, which would mean nothing to him. Someone would be a painter, and another would be an athlete. In every branch of learning, one must excel. The stereotyped way of getting a degree like B.A. or M.A. and then becoming a clerk is not the ideal of education. By following this method, we are ruining our young men.

Education should be according to the natural inclination of the individual soul, with the idea that wisdom cannot be drilled into the brain of the individual, and that all the books give mere suggestions, and, in reaction, we get the knowledge of the book. In order to understand a book, our mind must vibrate or be *en rapport* with the mind of the author. Then we get knowledge by itself, for it is a process of transmission. Knowledge does not come from outside. We will have to raise the vibration of our mind to the level of the vibration of the mind of the author, and then, like wireless telegraphy, the wisdom of the author's mind will be communicated to the student's mind. That is the natural principle of proper education. Are we doing that? No. But we had that system in ancient India. The present university system is going to be out of place, because, in England, the professors are beginning to realize the efficiency of our old brahmacharya *Vidyāpith* system. A professor would have a few students around him. He would be their guardian, and he would be of pure character, spotless in his ideals. He would be a moral man;

and he would not be like a man who gets a large pay and lives an immoral life. Such a man is not going to be the ideal teacher. And this method is going to be taken up in Europe and America in future. In that system, the student will find an example, and **an example is better than precept. One living example will** change the whole character of the student, and it will mould his career according to the ideal which is before him. Therefore, the present system of education is not a perfect one.

Again the ideal of a nation should be the ideal of education. Our minds are running towards the spiritual ideal. What is the cause of it? Because we have learnt all these different branches of science from religion. In Europe, religion was against scientific culture. Christianity stood against all intellectual development, against all science and all improvements. Think of the miserable condition of Galileo who said that the earth was moving. The Roman Church put him into a dungeon under torture, and asked him to retract his statement. But Galileo said : "No, you can torture me today, but the earth still moves. I cannot retract it, for it is the truth". That truth is an established fact of modern Astronomy. The warfare between science and religion in Europe was a long-standing one. It has not stopped yet. The fire of inquistion was kindled, and hundreds were burnt alive at the stake, simply because they did not submit their intellect to the dogmas of the Church. Giardano Bruno was burnt alive in the streets of Rome in 1600 A.D., because he was a believer in one supreme Spirit, whose body was matter and mind was the cosmic one. So, my friends, if religion were powerful in Europe today, there would have been no scientific culture, and no improvement or discovery, because their religion says about the creation in six

days out of nothing, while modern science teaches evolution with scientific facts. Religion tells them that the earth was created six thousand years ago before our sun came into existence. But modern Astronomy teaches that the sun was created before the earth; and Geology tells us that our earth is millions of years old, and that the first appearance of man was about one hundred thousand years ago. How can we reconcile these contradictory statements? If we accept one we shall have to reject the other. But in our country, my friends, *Sānatana Dharma* never stood against science or free thought. You may believe in God, or you may not, but so long as you are a moral and spiritual man, you are worshipped and honoured by the masses as the ideal of the nation. Buddha did not believe in a personal God yet him we regard as an *Avatāra*. Kapila did not believe in a personal God; in his *Sankhya* system he says : *Isvarāsiddheh pramānābhāvāt*, i.e. 'there is no proof for the existence of a personal God who is Creator of the universe'. Still Kapila was the greatest of all sages.

We have hundreds of such cases, because free-thought was the watchword of the Hindus in ancient times. They had no bigotry and no sectarianism; they did not mean by the Vedas a set of books which must be accepted as true in every letter, but they meant by Veda, *wisdom*. God is the ocean of wisdom, which is eternal and indestructible. There is only one source of wisdom which occasionally reveals itself to mortal minds, and through them the world learns something about the eternal Truth. Who could have known anything about God, if he did not reveal himself to mortal minds? We know from the life of Mohammed that when he was praying on Mount Heerah, he had a revelation.

He was living in a cave in that desert, and his heart was longing for a knowledge of the divine Being, and Truth was revealed to him. Truth is not confined to any particular individual or nation, but it is for everybody. As the sun rises and shines equally upon the heads of all nations, even so does the sun of eternal Truth shine and reveal itself among all nations. Whoever will long for such realization will find a way to the attainment of Truth. This conception has made the Hindu mind broad and tolerant. It does not condemn anybody. The Hindu embraces a Mohammedan, because Mohammedanism is a path to the realization of Truth. He accepts Christianity, because Christ revealed the universal Truth among the Jews who had sectarian ideals. Christ said : "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."[1] Our Vedas say the same thing. Where is then the difference?

The essentials of all religions are one and the same, and that is self-mastery, God-consciousness, self-control and purity. These are the ideals. He is regarded as a civilized man by the Hindus who lives a pure and unselfish life, who is loving, kind and compassionate to all, and he conquers avarice by generosity and hatred by love. But a man, who robs others to promote his self-interest, is not a civilized man, according to the Hindu ideal, and I do not believe that he is regarded as a civilized man, according to the Mohammedan ideal either. The ideals are the same. A man must not be judged by his outside, but by his inner nature and character. The outward garb, dress, clothes, formality, and etiquette do not amount to anything. The Lord sees the purity of

[1] St. John, VIII, 32.

the heart : "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God."[1] Purity of heart is the *sine qua non* of God-vision. We must be pure in heart and loving to all, irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. Any education that separates mortals from mortals, and disunites brothers from brothers, is not uplifting and should not be the ideal. Therefore, my brethren, I consider that the aim of education should not be mere intellectual culture with commercial ideals, to gain our livelihood in the struggle of competition, but that the ideal of education should be such as will elevate man from his ordinary selfish state into the unselfish universal ideal of Godhood. Anything that will make us kneel down before that grand ideal, is uplifting.

A Hindu philosopher went to Greece, and asked Socrates what he was studying. Socrates answered : "My study is the study of man" The Hindu philosopher smiled and replied : "How can you know anything about man when you do not know God?" This is an answer that could come from Hindu alone and not from any other philosopher, because the Hindu alone, from ancient times, has regarded the individual soul as a part and parcel of the divine Being. The divine spark dwells within us, but we must recognize that divine spark in all methods of education. We must regard the child who is born as a living God; and not that it was created out of nothing and a soul was breathed into its body from outside, but that the soul of the child is the maker of its physical body. The soul is eternal, and it could never be created. It is the body that could be created. This highest wisdom is given only in the Hindu philosophy of

[1] St. Matthew, V. 8.

Vedanta, and the Western world today recognize this fact. When Christ said : "The kingdom of Heaven is within you", he perhaps meant the same thing, but the Occidentals do not understand its meaning. We Orientals understand Christ better than the Occidentals do. The other day I was talking with an Englishman in Calcutta, and he said that he had a theory that the Hindu mind could understand Christ better than the Occidentals. I said : "I share that belief, because I know that the Occidental mind takes everything too literally, while Christ, himself spoke in metaphors and parables which should be understood in the same way as the parables and metaphors of Buddha and Krishna". He replied : "I believe you are right". So, my friends, we Hindus can give a new interpretation to the doctrines of Christianity, and perhaps, a new interpretation to the ideals of other religions from the highest standpoint of our Vedanta.

Vedanta means the highest wisdom, and it does not mean any book. *Veda* means 'wisdom', while *anta* means 'end.' The word wisdom is derived from the same Sanskrit root *vid*—to know and 'end' is derived from *anta.* You will be surprised to know that most of the English words that we use now in our colloquial conversation had their origin in Sanskrit words. The word father, in Latin *pater,* in Greek *pat-er,* is in Sanskrit *pitar*; the word mother in Latin *mater,* is in Sanskrit *matar;* the word brother is in Sanskrit *bhratar;* the word daughter is in Sanskrit *duhitar;* the word 'name' is in Sanskrit *naman;* the word 'serpent' is in Sanskrit *sarpa;* the word 'path' is in Sanskrit *patha;* the word 'soup' is in Sanskrit *supa;* the word 'bond' is in Sanskrit *Bandha;* the word 'punch' is in Sanskrit *Pancha* which means five; and the *punch* which the Europeans drink, is called so, because it is made up of

five ingredients. Therefore, my friends, you can trace most of these English words into Sanskrit roots. Æsop's fables and Pilpay's stories were based upon the stories from the *Hitopadesha*. All these animal stories originated in India, and travelled westward into Europe. Thus you see that the culture of the ancient Hindu people was great, and during the Buddhistic age that culture was improved in various lines. Here you had the Nalanda University. Do you know what that University was like? Ten thousand students used to live there. We read a description of that Nalanda University in the writings of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, who lived there for many years. He said that from one hundred pulpits instructions were given every day to different calsses of students, and that no student disobeyed the orders of the University or its rules and regulations during the seven hundred years of its existence. Think of the discipline which the Nalanda University had. I went to see the ruins of Taxila University. There also several thousand students used to live. The Chinese scholars used to come and study various branches of science and philosophy from the Hindu teachers. The principal of the Nalanda University was Shilabhadra, the teacher of Hiuen Tsang, who was a Bengalee from Gauda, the then capital of Bengal. Dipankar, whose birth place was Vajrayogini in Vikrampur in East Bengal, was a great philosopher who went to Tibet to preach the gospel of Buddha. Buddhist preachers also went to Egypt, China, and Japan. At one time the inhabitants of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were all Buddhists, and Beharis and Bengalees were brothers who had one Magadhi language. The Jagannath temple in Orissa was a temple of the Buddhists. There was no caste distinction, and all were brothers. That brotherliness should be revived once more.

At that time, of course, Islam had not risen, and Christianity was not there. But still the ideal of universal brotherhood was preached by Buddha; and even Krishna, who ante-dated Buddha, declared in a trumpet voice before the world :

"Vidya-vinayasampanne Brahmane gavi
hastini,
Shuni chaiva shvapake cha panditaha
samadarshinaha."

"He is a pundit, a true philosopher and a scholar, who can see the same universal Spirit in a well-cultured Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog, and in a pariah."

That has been our ideal, but the people have forgotten it, and selfishness has crept in, where unselfishness and brotherly feeling should prevail. We learn in our Sanskrit primer :

"Ayam nija paro veti ganana laghuchetasam,
Udaracharitanantu vasudhaiva kutumvakam."

"This is mine, or this is yours, such distinction is made by low-minded people, but those who are broad and liberal should consider the whole world as their relative". Did not Christ teach: "Love thy neighbour as thyself ?" If your neighbour be a pariah or a Chandala or a Brahman, or of any other religion, Christian, or Mohammedan, him you should regard as your own self, and

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, V, 18.

him you should love as you love your own self. This is our religion. Abandoning this ideal of universal religion, if we simply cultivate our intellect for commercial purposes, will that be the ideal of proper education ? It is degrading the humanity to instal commercialism in the place of universal religion in educational lines. Therefore, my friends, our national ideal should be brought forward and should be emphasized in every branch of our teaching. I do not mean any sectarian religion, and I do not mean the worship of idols or iconoclastic ideas, but I mean the universal religion which underlies all sectarian religions, whether it be Islam, or Christianity, or Hinduism, or Buddhism. Among all special religions there is an undercurrent of true religion which is nameless and formless, and that nameless religion should be brought forward.

The non-essential parts of every religion, that is, doctrines and dogmas, rituals and ceremonials, must vary according to the needs of the people. In dress, for instance, I may wear a turban, and you may wear some other thing, a cap or a hat, but that does not change your soul or its nature which is a part and parcel of the divine Being. For that reason education should be based upon universal principles and not upon sectarian religious ideals. It would otherwise be degrading the humanity. The object of education should be the attainment of perfection. That is the highest aim of education. In the Vedas, we read of two kinds of *vidyā* : *parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā*. *Aparā vidyā* is that which explains the laws of nature and describes the cause of various phenomena; but *parā vidyā* is that by which one attains to Godconsciouseness, and that should be the aim of *aparā vidyā*. That is why you are studying all things. Why do you go to a

chemical laboratory ? You go to study the fundamental elements of all phenomena. Why do you study physics and all the different branches of science ? You study to know how this world has come into existence. Why do you study anatomy and physiology ? You study to understand how the organs of your system are working and co-ordinating in harmonious development and how the body grows from a minute cell. Sir J.C.Bose has been studying the plant-life. You have heard him speak of the wonderful truths which he has discovered. One of them is that in the whole world there is one life and not many. The life that is beating in us is pulsating in the plants and even in a blade of grass. As we eat, so the grass eats, and as we sleep, so the plants sleep. There is a gradual manifestation of life from the lower to the higher in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom; and we should study them all so that our knowledge will be complete.

Physically we should develop and train our bodies, so that we can have muscles of iron and nerves of steel, and then we should educate our minds, so that we may be able to acquire self-mastery, and not remain slaves of passions, desires and selfishness. Self-conquest should be our ideal in training our minds. In the West, there is psychology without a *psyche*, which means the soul. There, in the study of psychology, the existence of a *psyche* is not admitted, but Hindu psychology is far better. We should educate our intellect, so that we can see the all-pervading Spirit, and reason that although there are various manifestations, yet there is an underlying unity of existence. Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and that plan we should discover by training our intellect. Furthermore, we should realize what is eternal and what is non-eternal, what is unchangeable and what

is changeable. That would be the function of the intellect which is trained, and has reached its ideal education.

Proper education should include moral training. The whole of ethics depends upon love, which means not selfish love, but the expression of oneness in spirit. If you love somebody, you become one with the beloved; otherwise there is no love. Love means the attraction of two souls, which would vibrate in the same degree, and which would be tuned in the same key Just as in a room if two musical instruments are kept tuned in the same key and when one is struck the other responds, so is the case with two lovers. When the thoughts and ideas, which rise in the mind of the lover, will vibrate in the mind of the beloved and produce similar response, then there is love, and that means oneness in thought and in spirit.[1] Again, where there is true love, there cannot be any selfishness. If you love anyone, you should be ready to give him all that you possess because you would say : "O my brother ! Thy necessity is greater that mine. Whatever is mine is thine". We must learn to merge our small personality into the bigger personality of humanity'. That should be the ideal of moral education; and spiritual education would reach its climax, when the student would realize the truth of the saying : "I and my father are one"; not physically one, not mentally, and not intellectually, but spiritually we are one, because there is only one Spirit in the universe. Therefore each soul is a potential Christ, each soul is potentially Divine, and each soul is Brahman, and any system of education which is based upon this fundamental principle of potenial Divinity in the soul of the individual, would be considered as the highest.

[1] *Vide* Swami Abhedananda : *Human Affection and Divine Love.*

Now the question may arise how should we apply this to our social life ? That is very easy. We should not be narrow, but we should carry that ideal of unity in variety in all the different stages of our social life. Just as two faces are not alike, so no two minds are alike. Your path is chalked out for you by the Lord himself, and I must be tolerant, and I must allow you to grow in your own way. Just as in a garden there are different kinds of trees, and you do not try to make two trees look alike. Do you try to make two trees bear the same fruit ? By that you would be destroying all the trees. So, my friends, this world is a garden and each individual is just like a plant. Let him grow and bear his own fruit. Allow him to grow. That should be your ideal. Why should you hinder his growth and progress ? Take your hands off. Take all the limitations off; and let him grow free; and he will bear the best fruit. But before he can bear the best fruit, you must give him the proper environments. Just as a plant cannot give its best fruit, unless you give it proper light and heat, and the nourishment of the earth, air and water, which are the environments under which a plant will bear its best fruit, so you make him manifest the highest ideal of his life by giving him the proper conditions. That is your duty. Why should you hate a Chandala ? Why is he a Chandala ? Because you have made him so. You can make him a Brahmin tomorrow, if you allow him all the proper environments of a Brahmin. Do not blame him, because he lives in filth and dirt, and is unclean. Why is he so ? Because you have made him like that, and now after putting him down in the lowest rank and giving him all the conditions that would be degrading to him, you blame him, condemn him, and hate him. It is not Chandala, who should be blamed, but you, the leaders of the society. You have made him so. Therefore, take

the blame upon your own shoulders, and correct it and make him a saint. Give him proper training, grant him proper education, love him, and give him a chance to stand on his own feet. Do you do that? No, you do not. Abraham Lincoln, who was the President of the United States some years ago and who liberated the slaves, was once walking in the streets of Washington with a friend, and found a beetle on the road. It is turned on its back, its legs were up in the air, and it was struggling to stand on its feet. Abraham Lincoln stooped down and picked up that beetle and put it on its legs. His friend asked him what he was doing. He said : "I made that poor fellow stand on its own feet." That was his nature. So, my friends, I wish everyone of you would become an Abraham Lincoln. If you see a poor man, make him stand on his own legs, give him the proper opportunity, do not tyrannize over him, do not call him names, and do not condemn him; but love him as you love your own self. Do you give such instruction in your schools and colleges ? If you do, you are worthy of the place you are occupying. If you try to bring that out in your system of education, the world will bow down to you, and the Lord will be pleased that you have worshiped Him in spirit and also in the form of human beings. Where shall we find God, if we leave all men out ? God is not sitting above the clouds. He is here; Him I see in your faces. He is the *Virat-Purusha.*

Sahasrashirsa purushaha
sahasraksaha sahasrapat.

"The Lord is with infinite eyes, with infinite number of ears with infinite hands and infinite feet" He sees through all eyes,

hears through all ears, works through all hands, and thinks through all minds. The collective spiritual Being is the Lord and so long as you separate individuals from the whole, you destroy the relation between the individual and the universe, between man and God. Therefore, my friends, we should learn to see God in man and woman, and love them, worship them, feed them, and educate them. Women should have equal rights and privileges with men. That should be the ideal; and then the highest perfection which is latent in each soul; and which is described in all the scriptures of the world, will be realized; and such is the object of ideal education. Education should not degrade man or woman, and it should not be for money-making; but it should be the culture of the soul for the good of all; and that soul-culture will bring in perfection as its ideal, and the whole world will be benefited by such education. I wish to see that day, when India will have the privilege of imparting such ideal education in and through all colleges, and schools, both high and primary. Then the plan of the Lord of the universe will be fulfilled, and then we shall enjoy peace and happiness in this world and hereafter.

CHAPTER II

Practical Education

Delivered at
Kuala-Lampur, Rangoon
in 1921.

Mr. Chairman, Sisters and Brothers of Kuala Lumpur,

I am very pleased to be present on this occasion. I am also pleased to see the progress of this school that was started seven years ago. Under the management of our Swami Vivekananda it has made considerable progress and you have noticed during the recitations of the music how cleverly the young boys and girls played their parts. If they had to play these parts in a foreign tongue, I do not believe they would have enjoyed it or you would have enjoyed it as much as you have done now. Because nothing is dearer to us than our mother tongue. Our mother tongue and our motherland are the two things we most revere. Do you know the meaning of the mother tongue ? It is the language which the child inherits from its mother not only after its birth but also before it is born—during the pre-natal condition of the mother. Whatever thoughts and ideas the mother may have during that period the child inherits them. These ideas the child learns to think in the tongue which the

mother speaks. You must remember that all our thoughts cannot be expressed unless we use words. Words are absolutely necessary in thinking. For instance, if you think of the table, you will have to repeat the word table, table, table before your mind. There is a relation between thought and words. The science of language tells us that here lies the secret of the thinking power of the child. The child must think in words, and which are the words that are most convenient for the child to utter, the words which it learns from its mother, and not in a foreign tongue, because the brain-cells and the whole nervous system of the child is trained by the mother. This happens not after the birth, but from the pre-natal days before the birth. Therefore, our mother-tongue stands out as the first language. You must not neglect that. What is your worth, as our Chairman has said correctly, if your mother language is neglected.

You see that I now speak English, and I never spoke English before I left India 25 years ago, but when I was lecturing in England many of the Englishmen said that I spoke better English than they themselves. I have no English accent, and you know how Englishmen speak. They close their mouths in a peculiar manner when they speak. They are so proud of their mother tongue that they twist it in any way they like. No matter how ugly it sounds. Still the moment an Englishman talks we know that he is an Englishman, because of his English accents. Go to the different parts of England and listen how some of them speak. If you go a few miles out to Wales or to Scotland, you will find the accent more marked. Specially is this so in Scotland where a man will say that he will go to *church*. The accent of an Englishman, living in London, is one, and that

of people outside is another. Outside London you get what is called 'Cockney'. Even if you understand English you would not be able to understand that language. So there are different pronunciations and different accents in the English language. I have kept of all these accents. In America again, they have their own accents, which amounts to a nasal twang. I do not have any American accents either. I develop all my power of thinking in my native tongue. I was a Sanskrit scholar. If I were not a Sanskrit scholar it would have been difficult for me to speak in a foreign tongue so well, because Sanskrit is the mother of the English language. Several words in the English language can be traced back to the Sanskrit. It is the root, and if you neglect the Sanskrit language you neglect the root. If you let the root rot away and try to water the branches, do you think that the tree will grow by putting water on the branches ? That is absured. The mother tongue should never be neglected. A child's brain is formed so that it may develop the centre of speech. A study of the nervous system and of the brain will make you realize that the power of speech is created by the soul in the brain. For instance, a man who exercises the right-hand in his daily life develops his centre of speech in the left side of the brain, and the man who uses his left hand develops his speech-centre in the right side of the brain. There are two hemispheres in the brain. The right-hand centre is in the left, and the left-hand one in the right. The soul develops the speech-centre which must correspond with the mother tongue first. What is the use of learning a foreign language which is not your mother tongue, and which makes you neglect your mother tongue ? Your whole life, i.e. the whole basis of your family life, depends upon your ideas and imagery you have

gathered in your mind. Now, every individual, no matter where he belongs to, has an imagery which he holds in his mind, and which is expressed outwardly by words. You must form your own imagery by your own mother tongue. Otherwise, it would be unnatural. In Europe there are different nations. In Switzerland the boys and girls have to learn five different languages. You know that Switzerland is in the centre of Europe, surrounded by other nations speaking other languages. On one side is Germany, on other sides are Austria, Italy and France. As English is the language of the market, the Swiss has to learn it. So that a Swiss boy has to learn first of all the Swiss language, the German, French, Italian and English. A Japanese must learn his mother tongue before he learns a foreign language. Similarly the English boy or girl must learn English first. Now English is universally spoken all over the world. Any one who speaks English can easily travel the world. Of course, with us it is different. We are British subjects. We have to earn our bread and butter by serving the Government, and, therefore, we must speak their language. But we should consider English as a secondary language. If we had not to earn our living by serving the Government we would not have to learn English. Our mother language Sanskrit is perfect, it is older and better than any Europen language. It generally takes two years to train one's mind to think in a foreign language, but one can think easily in one's mother tongue.

The English language is imperfect and ungramatical. Because there are so many exceptions to a rule in English grammar. A foreigner finds it very difficult to learn English. It has no phonetic rule, and therefore it is imperfect. For instance,

whereas the letter '*O*' in the word '*to*' is pronounced in one way, the letter '*O*' in '*go*', is pronounced in quite a different way. The sound of the '*O*' varies according to the word in which it is used. Again, we pronounce though (*dho*) in one way and cough (*Kof*), in quite a different way. A Frenchman finds it difficult to learn English; a German will find it very difficult though the English language is derived from low-German. 'Anglo-Saxon' means English and German mixed together, for the Saxons came from Germany originally. Low-German is the origin of most of the English words. For instance, *wasser* in German became *water* in English, the letter '*S*' being turned into '*T*.' Again, there are other words like father, mother, brother, sister, in the English language which are derived from Sanskrit. Sanskrit travelled through Greece and through Latin countries to England and to all the Anglo-Saxon languages. For instance,

English		*Sanskrit*
Mother	....	Matar
Father	....	Pitar
Brother	....	Bhratar
Daughter	....	Duhitar
Sister	....	Sassar
Serpent	....	Sarpa
Path	....	Patha

So you see when you neglect Sanskrit, our mother tongue, the origin of the English language, we make a fundamental mistake. You are neglecting your mother tongue. And that is the language in which you should try to train your children

and not in English which is a market language. What is use of burdening the young minds with foreign words, a foreign vocabulary, and foreign ideas which are entirely different from the imagery which they have derived from their mothers ? This is the scientific reason why each parent should realize the necessity of educating their boys and girls in their mother tongue first. A rudimentary start at least should be made in the mother tongue. Go to any philologist and he will tell you the same thing. So the parents who neglect their childrens' mother tongue make a great mistake. They generally make their children unfit for thinking.

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What is the object of education ? The object of education is to enable a person properly to stand on his feet and understand the laws of nature, to understand not only the ordinary law of physical nature, but the mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual nature. If you cannot think you are not able to express your thoughts in words. But when you can express your thoughts in one language you are perfectly free to express them in another language. It does not take any time to learn how to speak English. If you try to speak English even when you have passed the fifth standard in your own language it will take only a short time. It will not be difficult if you have learnt to think in your mother tongue. The object of education is not only to learn to think, but to think independently. You must not be a phonograph of other peoples' thoughts. You must be original in your own thinking. This is the first thing. You see our great Lord Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He was absolutely original. He never went to any school or college because he did not want to be a phonographer for the people's thoughts. When you

study a book your mind absorbs the thoughts of the writer, and you must know that those thoughts are only suggestions which help you to think in that line. We do not gain any knowledge from outside. Knowledge cannot be poured from outside into the brain of a child. Books help us to acquire suggestions which are like pebbles thrown into a pool. They create ripples and react. So when a suggestion is thrown into a child's mind it begins to react and in that reaction the child gathers what is called 'knowledge'. Knowledge comes from within. Our soul is a part of the Infinite. Our soul is all-knowing. All knowledge is already buried within us and we do not know how to bring it out. You are making mistake by giving the suggestion in a foreign tongue which will not create the reaction so quickly as it would do if you give suggestion in your mother tongue.

In America, do you know what they are adopting in their Kindergarten schools ? They are not adopting the usual English alphabet, but they have taken the Hindu system of phonetics, as is seen in Sanskrit. For instance, in Sanskrit we do not use the letters *g-o (jio)* and pronounce *go*, because it is not scientific. It is not the scientific way, it is not phonetic. You see all the vowels and consonants in Sanskrit language are perfect. See the first five consonants. All our sounds are produced according to the position of the tongue and mouth from which they are uttered. For instance, when you open your mouth and utter the guttural sounds, except the vowels, they are fives, *viz., ka, kha, ga, gha, uma*. Now what sound can you pronounce by keeping your mouth wide opened ? Four out of five : *ka, cha, ta, tha, pa*. The last of these would be when you close the lips and then open. Then you close and utter again from the root of the

teeth : *ta, tha, da, dha, na*. Again you have five sounds : *pa, pha, ba, bha, ma,* which can be pronounced only with the lips. This is absolutely a perfect science. In the English language you neglect the phonetic system. For example *'H' (ech)* is pronounced as *Hah.* Now in the Kindergarten schools in America they are taking up this phonetic system that all the sounds should be called as they are uttered and this is very perfect. In America, they are changing the whole construction of the English language, and are taking out the letters which are not pronounced. There in the Kindergarten system of America, the mind of the child is consulted before they give any education to the child. In a Kindergarten school, different things are kept, for instance, clay, pencils, slates. There are pictures, blocks of letters, and the children are brought into the room and are asked what they would like to make, whether a figure of a cat, a snake or something like that. That is the test, and that test is set before they give any instruction. If the child has any inclination of drawing, it must be developed in that line, if for music, that must be his line. That system should be introduced into our Kindergarten schools. The education that you get in the English schools is not the right kind of education. I have thought about this great problem. We do not want to denationalize ourselves; we do not want to neglect our mother-tongue. But still we must have education. For this end I have made up my mind to have in Calcutta an Institute for practical instruction, where there may be not only the development of the body, mind, and intellect, but where men may grow up and become spiritual giants. As I have already stated, you do not understand the value of education and the value of environment. You do not know anything about yourselves. You do not know

how you should eat, what food is necessary for the growth of the body. You do not know what food will develop your thoughts, your brain, your muscles, your bones and your nervous system. You eat at random because you do not know better. You think that a lot of chilly will stimulate your brain, but you do not know that thereby you are ruining your stomach. You do not know practical Chemistry and the results of food analysis. Study Chemistry i.e., practical Chemistry, in which all the food-stuffs are analyzed to their proper elements. You do not know what chemical elements are necessary for the growth of the body; or what amount of acid is secreted by the stomach for digestive purpose. If you take such food as will stop the secretion of the stomach then you will have indigestion. If you increase the secretion of the gastric juice in the stomach then you will have a false appetite. That is another disease. You will have a desire to eat at all the times. That is a disease from which great many people suffer. That is why it is absolutely necessary to have a practical education. You know nothing about your body or how to keep it well or how to protect it from the germs of diseases. You do not know what kind of water to drink and from what vessel. I have noticed that you do not clean the metal vessels from which you drink. They must be cleaned every time and must be well polished so that no dirt can remain. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Water contains germs. This knowledge can be gained only from practical education and this should be taught to our boys and girls. Hygiene must be taught to them. Get a food chart and have it hung in the school. It will give details of the chemical elements of all kinds of food. Rice is the best food. It has all the qualities for the growth of the body, mind and brain. It has everything.

But rice must be unpolished. Polishing should not be done. Polished rice is not good and should not be eaten because the polishing process takes away the vitamin of the rice. The Japanese people ate polished rice and they got the terrible disease called *Beri-beri*. The eating of rice will make the growth of your hair perfect and those who do not eat rice gradually become baldheaded or lose their hair. If you imitate the English diet and the English method of eating, you will soon find that your digestive system is not fit to digest meat. You will get sick. Your stomach is not trained to eat beef and pork. You have inherited your diet, your tastes and your stomachs from your forefathers and if you discard that diet, you will get sick and contact diseases. You may remain vegetarians, because from the vegetables you get all the nourishment that one gets from meat. It is not necessary to eat meat. The moment you take to eat meat you will acquire the tendency to drink, because meat and drink must go together. Therefore, those who eat meat cannot stop their drinking habit and accept prohibition. That is why in America where they have prohibition they are encouraging vegetarianism. They have found that they can get all the essential food-elements from peas, beans and other vegetables, and wheat and rice.

My friends, you are living in a land from where you cannot see the great changes going on in the outside world; the changes are all based upon the fundamental principles of education which we have inherited from our ancient *Rishis*. Another thing must I tell you that it is necessary for us to learn what are the requirements of the mind. Our education must not only help us to know ourselves physically, mentally and

spiritually, but it must also help us to understand our environments. You do not understand why seasons come and go. You do not know what is the relation of the earth to the solar system. You ought to know the relations of the planets, and some elementary knowledge of Astronomy should be imparted to the boys and girls, as for instance, that the earth is rotating round its axis. The rising and setting of the sun should be told in a story form. The sun is so far away that it looks to us like a small disc. It is ninety-three millions (93,000,000) of miles away and the light takes nine minutes to come from the sun to the earth, travelling at the rate of one hundred and eighty six thousand (186,000) miles per second. Think of the distance of these stars which are so far away. Some of them are bigger than our sun. The light, travelling from these stars, takes years to reach the earth. In the meantime, the planets might have been destroyed, but still we see the light. When you see a star, you are looking at a thing that was a star in the past. You must not think that it is just as you see it now, but just as it was, when the light started to travel from the star, say fifty years ago. Can you imagine that ? You do not see what it is at present, but what it was a hundred or a thousands years ago. This is rather a revelation to you, but these are the things you have to learn. Then you will be able to get a clear idea of what the world is like.

You are thinking of a Creator. Where is He ? You are told of the heaven. Where is it ? Where is heaven ? It is but a mental state. You go on living on this physical plane. It is just as when you go to sleep in a dream. You see certain things in a dream. Do you know where you see those dream ? Is it in the external

space ? No, it is in the mental space. You must think of these truths and relize them. Then your life will be worth-living. To do a little clerical work is not the ideal of life. If you want to stand on your feet, and enjoy your freedom you must be independent. Manufacture something, and invent something, just as they do in England. There they do not want to be clerks; they want to be independent. That idea of self-help we have lost. That is the greatest degeneration which we are going through now. Unless we reform ourselves and develop our self-culture, no one can help us, and God cannot help you unless you help yourselves. All education must be in harmony with common sense. It is the best sense that God has given us. It is the Divine wisdom. It will be the *Brahmajnana,* when it is developed to the knowledge of the *Brahman,* the infinite Being. Do not accept blindly the doctrines and dogmas which you hear. If they appeal to your reason, and if they are beneficial to you and your fellow-beings, then accept them. This is the true ideal of education, and it will help you individually to develop your *buddhi* (intelligence), and grasp the fundamental principles of life and death, which is the result of the highest education.

This is explained in the Vedas. We, the Hindu people, have always longed for knowledge. Long before the British Government had built schools in India, we had our village schools, our *Pathashalas,* our high schools for Sanskrit, and other places of education. In almost all villages, we had schools, and these schools imparted knowledge in different branches of learning. Science, philosophy, and moral and spiritual laws were taught.[1] All these different branches, the parents must

[1] *Cf.* Swami Abhedananda : *India and Her People,* pp. 170-215.

learn first. If the parents do not know them, then they should not beget children. Ignorant fellows ought not to have children at all. They should go without children, and without wives. Unless the parents are properly educated, they cannot educate their children. By the education of children we give the greatest help to mankind.

Therefore, *vidya* is the highest thing. We worship Sarasvati, the goddes of wisdom. There are two kinds of *vidya*, *para-vidya* and *apara-vidya*. *Para-vidya* is the highest knowledge which can be gained. *Apara-vidya* is the knowledge of this world which, as I have already described, is the knowledge of the laws which govern our bodies and mind and which help us to understand our environments. *Para-vidya* is the highest wisdom, the knowledge of the Infinite, which enables us to know that this world is only playground where we live only for a time.

Our highest ideal is to know who we are, what we are, why we have come to this world, why we go, and where we go after death. These are the most important question. Prepare your children by giving them such education. They will then not only be thankful to you, but they will be able to understand their own physical conditions and the laws which govern their life on this material plane and also the moral and spiritual laws which will ultimately lead to the benefit of mankind and the attainment of God-consciousness. This is the goal of all education. Whether you learn English or any other language, you must remember that the highest ideal of all education is the attainment of God consciousness. Then and then only we will realize that we are the children of immortal Bliss. Then and

then only we shall gain true happiness in this world, and after death we shall enter the abode of supreme happiness, eternal bliss and everlasting life.

CHAPTER III

Female Education

(Delivered before the
Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa
Girls' School, George Town, Madras
on 17th July, 1906).

Ladies and Gentleman,

When your worthy Vice-President explained why this school has been called *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Girls' School*, it occurred to me that this is the most appropriate name by which the School could be styled. There could not have a better name for the Girls' School in this age, because Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna realized that every woman, whether young or old, is the representative of the Divine Mother, the Sakti, the Mother of the universe, *Jagantmata*. It was he who, for the first time, made it known to the world that every woman should be considered as the Divine Mother in flesh and blood. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who is now recognized as the Incarnation of Vishnu, made his first teacher a lady.[1] He was the only *Avatara*

[1] This lady was great Trantric Sadhika, named Yogesvari Bhairavi. She helped Sri Ramakrishna during his Tantric Sadhana as an *Uttara-Sadhika*, in Dakshineswar.

who took a Brahmin lady, the *Brahmacharini,* as his spiritual teacher. By doing that, he raised every woman to a position which is desired even by the gods. The highest position that can be given to womanhood was given by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, and he realized that the greatness of our country could be achieved only by educating the young girls, the women of our country. The young girls who are studying here, will become the future mothers and their children will be the future generation. They will be the heart and soul of the Hindu community and of Hindu nation. How important it is for us then, that these girls should be properly trained and educated. Why should more than half of the Hindu population be deprived of all the privileges that come through right education and of the enlightenment that comes through the knowledge of various branches of science, philosophy and religion ? They have more right than we have, because they are going to be the mothers of the future generation. You do not realize how important it is for mothers to be welltrained. Otherwise, the children will not inherit those qualities which are great and inspiring. If we want to have children, strong and genius-like, we must educate their mothers first. This has been the great defect in our present system of education in India, especially among the Hindu women; but from the Vedic period we find that the education of women was highly considered and was given freely, irrespective of caste distinction. If we study the Vedas we shall find that there were ladies who were like Incarnation of Sarasvati such as Gargi, Maitreyi, and others. You will find many female names like Gargi in the Vedic literature. Even in *Puranas,* we find that their knowledge and education were supreme, and they were held in great respect,

and that they even commanded the male members of the community and guided them; but today we are so negligent about our education that we pay little attention to our young boys and girls. I appeal to the Hindu parents not to neglect this school but to support it strongly and make it a *Hindu National Girls' College*, where higher education will be imparted to all the Hindu girls and where some girls will be trained as teachers later on. We need women teachers. It is a mistake to let male teachers teach the girls, because women know their needs better than men. Therefore, the first advice that I can give to Directors of this School is to train women teachers.

I am very glad to know that you have two women teachers in your school, but we want two dozens. If we have this number, they will be able to go from one *Peta* to another *Peta* and start other Schools. If there is any influence brought to bear by the missionary ladies, as has been said, then our Hindu ladies will do better. I also look forward to the time when a principal of a *National Hindu College* for women will be a Hindu lady. If you go to America, you will be able to see the culture of women. They are like the flowers and blossoms of the twentieth century, and those flowers are very beautiful in every respect. Young girls there do not marry so early as here. They devote all their youth to education. I have seen women 35 years old, pure in character, who are devoting their whole energy to study. They are not willing to get married, because marriage is considered by them to be the greatest bondage. They are staunch lovers of freedom and knowledge. If you go to Public Offices and Public Schools and Colleges, there you will find women clerks and teachers more in number than men, and they are the best

teachers. In the Kindergarten Schools, in Primary Schools, in High Schools and Colleges in America, you will find everywhere women teachers. Why should we not try to train such women-teachers among ourselves ? Everything is destructive of Hinduism in Missionary Schools. Nothing there is constructive. It is constructive in their own way, because they try to break the Hindu community. All this should be guarded against. You must unite your energy and take a stand against such foreign influence. If the parents of the girls do help and encourage such an institution, then they would be ruining themselves. It is upon them that the glory of the future generation greatly depends. Therefore, I appeal to all the parents to show proper encouragements without further delay, and help the Directors to erect a large building for this school. I hope that within a short time this school will have thousands of students. I would like to see it growing into a *High National College* for Hindu Women. I thank you all for having given me an opportunity to say these few words.

CHAPTER IV

An Address

to the Educational Conference
in America.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should not enter into this discussion this afternoon, but there is a reference of Dr. Jackson[1] in the course of his speech. The point which he has emphasized, in spite of the question raised by Prof. Newcombe, is one, I think, of the utmost consideration on the part of the *Educational Conference*. Therefore, I would like to draw the attention to this of the members of this Conference—the difference between the East and the West, which had occurred to me in the course of my travels in the West and the East.

Perhaps for many to accept the resolution of Dr. Jackson is a point of detail; but the fundamental question raised there, in any rapprochement between the East and the West for a mutual

[1] Dr. W. H. Jackson was a professor of Columbia University. He was a Sanskrit scholar as well as the professor of the Iranian language of Persia. He died on the 8th August 1937.

understanding of the principles governing the East and the West, principles of Eastern and Westtern civilizations should be understood mutually, and is of the utmost importance, if we are at all to arrive at any solid results out of this Conference.

I believe, as I told Dr. Jackson in the course of a conversation the other day, that the governing principle of Western civilization is the doctrine of *right*, in the sense of privilege, not *right* as distinguished from wrong. If you examine your own literature, or your own conversation, or your own discussion that takes place day by day in the daily papers, you will always find this *right* raised, you will find the people talking about the *rights* of minorities and the *rights* or majorities; and you will find the *rights* of the people, the *rights* of the state, the *rights* of women, the *rights* of a hundred things; and it is that principle that is governing the Western civilization, as it occurs to me. I speak subject to correction.

Now *right* implies certain definite things. *Right* implies a law to exercise your right, or to assert your right; *right* also implies efficiency. *Right* also implies individuality and all the features or the cardinal features of civilization, moral and intellectual.

Now, if you go to the East, and I speak with special reference to India (although I am convinced that the culture of Japan and of China is identical in a great measure with that of India), and examine the civilization of the East, you will find the word *kartavyam*, i.e., what you owe to yourself, to your society, to your community, to your own people, to your country, and to the world at large. It has a much wider conception than the

word *duty* in the English language, and I might pause here and draw the difference between *duty* and *right*. As I told you, when you regard *right*, you are thinking of what others owe to you; when you think of *duty*, you are thinking what you owe to others. In the first case you are rightly committing trespass on the rights of others, and in the case of duty there is no trespass there on your side. It may be that you are performing your duty for your ownself, but duty always deals with the contemplation of the attitude or the interest of the other fellows. Therefore, most of the conflicts that we have, are the results of the exaltation of *right* in Western civilization. But at the same time the adoption of the principle of duty is a result of the supervision of the individual interest. It also follows as a corollary that the individual interest is not the efficient instrument in the East as it is in the West. We are governed more by emotion in the East, as you are more by the intellect in the West. These are fundamental differences between the East and the West. I think the study of the Eastern and the Western civilizations ought to be confined to the growth of the two distinct civilizations, now so divergent and so little understood, yet fascinating to each other. But if you proceed further and ask how is it that in the West, you have always adopted the principle of right and in the East the principle of duty, then you come to a very difficult question. I venture to say, and I also intend to present my views on this question with considerable hesitation and subject to correction, that this principle of right has been adopted in the West largely because of its urban character of civilization. In the West even from the time of the Roman civilization, people have congregated in towns, and the institutions of towns have always determined the character of

the institutions of the people as a whole, whereas in the East, since industries have never been popularized there, people have never been concentrated to a large extent in towns, the real civilization being always a static civilization, as opposed to a dynamic civilization, which is the characteristic of urban population. When you have population congregated in large towns, when you have always people not static but dynamic, moving from one place to another and acquiring new interests, you have the suppression of new ideals in society. And it is very essential that each man should remember what rights he is going to acquire, what rights he is going to surrender. If he does not do it, he finds that he is very largely neglected by others and gets himself left behind in the race. Therefore, it is that the people in the West are more on the rights than on duty.

But in more slowly moving civilizations, where people are really static, where institutions are more or less fixed to a greater extent than other civilizations, there rights are more fixed and people learn duty more. The people are just, because they do not move so rapidly as in the urban populations. They turn more to leisure and more to the contemplation of others. I think that is why duty has been fostered more in the East than in the West. If that is so, and I think it is, we are up to this fundamental proposition, how far are we to move forward with the speed with which that civilization moves in the West ? If we move in the East, as you do in the West, do we run into the danger of adopting the principle of right, and overcome this duty that we owe to communities outside of ourselves, which is a distinctive part of our ancestral inheritance ? Now, on the other hand if the population has been so static, as they have

been in India and China, would it not run to the danger of bringing ruin to ourselves, and forgetting our rights ?

I do not know that any one of you will agree with me in the views I have expressed. But if there is any difference in the views I have pointed out as fundamental between the two civilizations, it is of the utmost necessity that people, who like myself have come here as educators of generations to come, should put their minds together, or their organizations should, to investigate the differences and come to an understanding by which we may avoid these differences and come to a more harmonious co-operation.

That is what I want to say, to emphasize, or to put emphasis upon. I must especially refer to this fact that most of the books that are written about the East, are written by the Westerners — men who believe more of their own civilizations than they do of other civilizations and who are not in a position to measure up the standards of Eastern civilization. I think it is time that the East should come out so that the West can understand it. The West is not to be blamed for judging the Eastern civilization, alien to them, with their own standards. If the West and the East will agree to this, that people in each country will put forward a reasonable presentation of the future—essential features governing their cultural principles of a getting together—it will have a forward movement, it will go far forward to overcome the misunderstanding, existing mutually between the East and the West. There I would recommend strongly as one of the proposals, if I am allowed to do it before this Conference, that the *Educational Conference* should invite

the people who are so qualified in the various countries as to describe for the benefit of the rest of the world, the essential characters of their cultural civilizations, their difficulties and to interpret to the world their histories, and the progress they made. And by doing so, I hope we shall be able to establish a lesson of co-operation to the greatest nations of the world. *(Applause).*

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AKSHARA GRANTHALAYA
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